



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

August 26, 2014

Ms. Valerie Coleman Ferguson
Associate General Counsel
Office of General Counsel
University of Houston System
311 East Cullen Building
Houston, Texas 77204-2028

OR2014-15044

Dear Ms. Ferguson:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 534487.

The University of Houston (the "university") received a request for specified reports relating to the university's endowment fund. Although you take no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, you state release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Cambridge Associates, L.L.C. ("Cambridge"). Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified Cambridge of the request for information and of its right to submit arguments to this office as to why the submitted information should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception in the Act in certain circumstances). We have received comments from Cambridge. We have considered the submitted arguments and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note Cambridge objects to the disclosure of information the university has not submitted to this office for review. This ruling does not address information that was not submitted by the university and is limited to the information submitted as responsive by the

university. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(e)(1)(D) (governmental body requesting decision from Attorney General must submit copy of specific information requested).

We next note some of the submitted information is subject to section 552.0225 of the Government Code. Section 552.0225(b) provides as follows:

The following categories of information held by a governmental body relating to its investments are public information and not excepted from disclosure under [the Act]:

- (1) the name of any fund or investment entity the governmental body is or has invested in;
- (2) the date that a fund or investment entity described by Subdivision (1) was established;
- (3) each date the governmental body invested in a fund or investment entity described by Subdivision (1);
- (4) the amount of money, expressed in dollars, the governmental body has committed to a fund or investment entity;
- (5) the amount of money, expressed in dollars, the governmental body is investing or has invested in any fund or investment entity;
- (6) the total amount of money, expressed in dollars, the governmental body received from any fund or investment entity in connection with an investment;
- (7) the internal rate of return or other standard used by a governmental body in connection with each fund or investment entity it is or has invested in and the date on which the return or other standard was calculated;
- (8) the remaining value of any fund or investment entity the governmental body is or has invested in;
- (9) the total amount of fees, including expenses, charges, and other compensation, assessed against the governmental body by, or paid by the governmental body to, any fund or investment entity or principal of any fund or investment entity in which the governmental body is or has invested;

(10) the names of the principals responsible for managing any fund or investment entity in which the governmental body is or has invested;

(11) each recusal filed by a member of the governing board in connection with a deliberation or action of the governmental body relating to an investment;

(12) a description of all of the types of businesses a governmental body is or has invested in through a fund or investment entity;

(13) the minutes and audio or video recordings of each open portion of a meeting of the governmental body at which an item described by this subsection was discussed;

(14) the governmental body's percentage ownership interest in a fund or investment entity the governmental body is or has invested in;

(15) any annual ethics disclosure report submitted to the governmental body by a fund or investment entity the governmental body is or has invested in; and

(16) the cash-on-cash return realized by the governmental body for a fund or investment entity the governmental body is or has invested in.

Id. § 552.0225(b). Cambridge states some of its submitted information consists of investment information subject to section 552.0225(b). Cambridge raises section 552.110 of the Government Code for its submitted information. We note, however, the exceptions to disclosure found in the Act, including section 552.110, do not apply to information that is made public by section 552.0225. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 623 at 3 (1994), 525 at 3 (1989). Accordingly, the types of information enumerated in section 552.0225(b) of the Government Code must be released to the requestor.

Cambridge states some of its remaining information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.110 of the Government Code. Section 552.110 protects (1) trade secrets and (2) commercial or financial information the disclosure of which would cause substantial competitive harm to the person from whom the information was obtained. *See* Gov't Code § 552.110(a)-(b). Section 552.110(a) protects trade secrets obtained from a person and privileged or confidential by statute or judicial decision. *Id.* § 552.110(a). The Texas Supreme Court has adopted the definition of trade secret from section 757 of the Restatement of Torts, which holds a trade secret to be:

any formula, pattern, device or compilation of information which is used in one's business, and which gives him an opportunity to obtain an advantage

over competitors who do not know or use it. It may be a formula for a chemical compound, a process of manufacturing, treating or preserving materials, a pattern for a machine or other device, or a list of customers. It differs from other secret information in a business . . . in that it is not simply information as to single or ephemeral events in the conduct of the business A trade secret is a process or device for continuous use in the operation of the business. . . . It may . . . relate to the sale of goods or to other operations in the business, such as a code for determining discounts, rebates or other concessions in a price list or catalogue, or a list of specialized customers, or a method of bookkeeping or other office management.

RESTATEMENT OF TORTS § 757 cmt. b (1939); *see also Hyde Corp. v. Huffines*, 314 S.W.2d 776 (Tex. 1958). In determining whether particular information constitutes a trade secret, this office considers the Restatement's definition of trade secret as well as the Restatement's list of six trade secret factors.¹ RESTATEMENT OF TORTS § 757 cmt. b. This office must accept a claim information subject to the Act is excepted as a trade secret if a *prima facie* case for the exception is made and no argument is submitted that rebuts the claim as a matter of law. *See Open Records Decision No. 552 at 5 (1990)*. However, we cannot conclude section 552.110(a) is applicable unless it has been shown the information meets the definition of a trade secret and the necessary factors have been demonstrated to establish a trade secret claim. *Open Records Decision No. 402 (1983)*.

Section 552.110(b) protects “[c]ommercial or financial information for which it is demonstrated based on specific factual evidence disclosure would cause substantial competitive harm to the person from whom the information was obtained[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.110(b). This exception to disclosure requires a specific factual or evidentiary showing, not conclusory or generalized allegations, substantial competitive injury would likely result from release of the information at issue. *Id.*; *see also Open Records Decision No. 661 at 5 (1999)* (to prevent disclosure of commercial or financial information, party must show by specific factual evidence, not conclusory or generalized allegations, release of requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm).

¹The Restatement of Torts lists the following six factors as indicia of whether information constitutes a trade secret:

- (1) the extent to which the information is known outside of [the company];
- (2) the extent to which it is known by employees and other involved in [the company's] business;
- (3) the extent of measures taken by [the company] to guard the secrecy of the information;
- (4) the value of the information to [the company] and [its] competitors;
- (5) the amount of effort or money expended by [the company] in developing the information;
- (6) the ease or difficulty with which the information could be properly acquired or duplicated by others.

RESTATEMENT OF TORTS § 757 cmt. b; *see also Open Records Decision Nos. 319 at 2 (1982), 306 at 2 (1982), 255 at 2 (1980)*.

Cambridge argues some of its information consists of commercial information, the release of which would cause the company substantial competitive harm under section 552.110(b) of the Government Code. Upon review, we find Cambridge has demonstrated the information we have marked constitutes commercial or financial information, the release of which would cause substantial competitive injury. Accordingly, the university must withhold this information under section 552.110(b) of the Government Code. However, we find Cambridge has not made the specific factual or evidentiary showing required by section 552.110(b) that release of any of its remaining information would cause the company substantial competitive harm. *See* ORD 661. Therefore, none of Cambridge's remaining information may be withheld under section 552.110(b).

Cambridge further argues some of its information constitutes trade secrets. However, we find Cambridge has failed to establish a *prima facie* case any portion of its remaining information meets the definition of a trade secret, nor has it demonstrated the necessary factors to establish a trade secret claim for its remaining information. *See* ORD 402. Therefore, none of Cambridge's remaining information may be withheld under section 552.110(a).

In summary, the university must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.110(b) of the Government Code; however, any information that is subject to section 552.0225 of the Government Code must be released to the requestor. The remaining information must be released.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml, or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



David L. Wheelus
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

DLW/bhf

Ref: ID# 534487

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Mr. Steven Y. Quintero
General Counsel
Cambridge Associates
125 High Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02110-2112
(w/o enclosures)